



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
HELD ON THURSDAY 17TH JANUARY 2008 AT SIR ROBERT MCALPINE'S,
BERNARD STEET, LONDON**

Present:	Peter Stocken	(Chairman)
	Sally Bugden	(Vice-Chairman)
	Michael Hill	(Hon. Treasurer)
	John Carter	
	Graham Jepson	
	Jeff Morris	
	Alan Nelson	
	Malcolm Oliver	
	Martin Pool	
	Barry Capal	(General Manager)
	Karen Durrell	(Minute taker)

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Philip Mason.

2 MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON THE 23RD OCTOBER 2007

It was agreed to reword the second sentence of item 8.2 as follows: “The cost of postage was approximately £5,000 per issue, but the possibility of bulk mailings to clubs would be considered if the Pay to Play proposals were accepted”.

Subject to this change the minutes were signed as an accurate record.

2.1 Matters Arising

2.1.1 General Manager Report

The General Manager reported that the Trust Fund was receiving donations and that Gift Aid letters had been sent to the donors. Articles would be placed in *English Bridge* and on the EBU website, concerning which Sally Bugden said she would be liaising with Matt Betts.

Our application to join the Bingo/Lotto scheme had been accepted.

2.1.2 Laws and Ethics: Best Behaviour

The Chairman reported that he had brought the two matters to a satisfactory conclusion.

2.2.3 Channel Trophy

Three junior England teams had taken part in the annual Junior Channel Trophy in Utrecht. The Under 20s team and the Under 25s Women's team had come first, whilst the Under 25s had come third.

2.2.4 EBL/WBF: Laws of Bridge

In the week before Christmas, the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman, together with David Davenport from the Portland Club and Grattan Endicott, had met with the President of the World Bridge Federation, José Damiani, to resolve the copyright issues over the publication of the new 2008 Laws of Bridge. It had been a constructive meeting and it had been agreed that the Portland Club would continue to hold the copyright within the United Kingdom. As in the past, the EBU would print the Laws, thus earning the profit from the sales, royalties therefrom going to the Portland Club; what percentage these should be would be negotiated in the near future

When the new laws come into effect, it was anticipated there would be complaints, but these would be directed to the WBF.

3 FINANCIAL MATTERS

3.1 Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer reported that we were ahead of budget at present due to late recruitment of new members of staff. We could expect a surplus of about £50,000 this year.

He also felt that, in keeping with the strategy for revitalising the EBU, there should be a clear alignment of management responsibility and accountability for budgets – and that this should apply to the 2008-9 budget process. The director responsible for each EBU activity should, in conjunction with the Chairmen of Standing Committees and other committees of the Board, where appropriate, define the programme for that activity and agree budgets for it with the appropriate staff in Aylesbury. This part of the process for 2008-9 was to be completed by 8th February and the guideline was to keep costs at or below current year levels. These components would then be assembled into a complete EBU budget, which would be presented to the March Board meeting by the Treasurer. However, should the Board require any explanations or changes, these would be down to the director responsible for the activity in question. The Board agreed with this recommendation.

In future all members of the Board would receive the Monthly Management accounts.

4 STRATEGY PROPOSALS

Sally Bugden thanked the members of MDAG for their assistance in collecting the data from the clubs and the analysis of it. She reported that so far sixty percent of our affiliated clubs had returned the questionnaire and the response had been encouraging.

She then asked the Board to consider the implications of the introduction of the Pay-to-Play proposals, if they were to be accepted at the Extraordinary Meeting of the Shareholders on June 4th.

After a long discussion, a proposal by Alan Nelson, seconded by Martin Pool, “that, on the condition that the data collected showed them to be a viable method of financing the EBU, this Board fully supported the introduction of the Pay-to-Play proposals” was carried unanimously. Naturally, the extent of the risks involved would be included in the recommendations sent out to the Shareholders for the June meeting.

4.1 Constitutional position

Barry Capal, in his role of Company Secretary pointed out that there would be two meetings on June 4th: the first for the ordinary business of the Shareholders’ meeting, the second for a vote on the resolution concerning the Pay-to-Play proposals.

John Carter said that if the proposals were accepted, the increase in the number of members of the EBU would increase considerably the number of delegates; the Shareholders would be likely to want the voting entitlement of counties re-assessed and this would require a change in the Articles of Association. The Chairman agreed, adding that the restructuring implicit in the introduction of the proposals would ultimately require other changes in the Articles but these could be addressed as and when they arose. Barry Capal pointed out that if the EBU became a charity, a complete redrafting of the Constitution would be required, but that was some way off.

5 PROCEDURES MANUAL

Barry Capal asked the Board for their final amendments by the 23rd January 2008. The manual would take effect from the 1st February 2008 and would be circulated to all appropriate people. The procedure for International expenses was agreed.

6 GENERAL MANAGER’S REPORT

Bridgemates:

Bridgemates were being used more at competitions though, as always with the introduction of new technology, some players had had problems with operating them.

Charities Act:

The Board gave its approval for moving on to the next stage of our application for charity status. If the EBU became a charity there would be substantial financial benefits well in excess of the legal costs incurred in achieving it.

Bridge Awareness Days:

These days would be held regionally; the pilot being held as part of a Mind Sports Day in the Railway Museum at York. The events were likely to take place in September/October when the schools had gone back. A costing of the project was requested for the next meeting.

Communications Officer:

Barry Capal was pleased to report that Matt Betts had been successful in getting local press coverage for competition winners and for various club and county events. On our own website he had placed a number of advertisement links and had been keeping the EBU page updated. This was available on club websites that use Bridgewebs.

He had been working with Mathew Bayliss in putting together a proposal for a possible Countdown-style programme for a digital channel. The Board gave its approval for him to investigate the prospect further. Although it was agreed that the EBU was not in a position itself to outlay the money required for production of the programme, it would give all the support it could to assist fund-raising for the project.

Barry Capal asked the Chairman to remind members of the Board that staff issues must go through him, the General Manager.

7 MEETING REPORTS

7.1 Editorial Board 11th December 2007

Sally Bugden said that negotiations with Blue2 regarding their contract had gone well and to the satisfaction of both parties. There would be fewer advertising pages, but she pointed out that we published more column-inches of bridge-related advertising than any other Bridge magazine.

7.2 Tournament Committee 13th December 2007 (Draft)

Baker Tilly's sponsorship would end at the Overseas Congress in Lanzarote. A formal thank you would be made by Peter Jordan at the Congress and the Chairman would be writing a letter of appreciation. The Board wanted minuted its own appreciation of what Baker Tilly had done. Sally Bugden said that the company was looking for other ways to sponsor the EBU.

Alan Nelson applauded the considerable work Jeff Smith had done on the competition software and suggested an ex gratia payment be made to him. The Board agreed.

7.3 Laws and Ethics 17th December 2007

7.3.1 Regulatory Body for the New Laws

Martin Pool reported that under the new 2008 Laws of Bridge the EBU Board, not the Law and Ethics Committee, would become the Regulating Authority. (Regulatory Authority now replaces the Sponsoring Organisation). The Laws and Ethics Committee recommended that the Board should delegate its responsibilities to the Law and Ethics

Committee and also to the Tournament Committee, but should assign Regulatory Powers to the Counties and Clubs. Assigning this authority to the Counties and Clubs meant there would be no comeback to the national organisation. The Board accepted the recommendation.

Martin said that within the Laws of Bridge, the Regulatory Bodies were allowed discretion in certain areas: the Laws and Ethics Committee had drawn up recommendations as to the various options the Committee felt were in the interests of our members. These were accepted in full. It was noted that some of changes in the Laws were moving in favour of the Club Player: this was welcomed.

Martin said that the Laws and Ethics Committee were concerned about the regulations governing the Gold Cup. Teams did not know whether they should be playing under Scottish, English (old) or English (new) regulations. He pointed out that while the BGB had no standing as a Regulatory Authority, the WBF Bye Laws do allow NBOs to create such bodies: what was required was for the NBOs involved to authorize the BGB to carry out this function for them.

7.3.2 Disciplinary Matters

The Chairman said that, in view of the problems that had been encountered since the introduction of the new Bye Laws in 2005, he felt serious consideration should be given to moving disciplinary proceedings from the Laws and Ethics Committee entirely and setting up an independent Conduct Committee. This received broad approval from the Board and it was decided that a review body, consisting of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Laws and Ethics Committee together with Malcolm Oliver, should examine the procedures of other countries – the United States, Australia and Holland were suggested – and put to the Board their recommendations as soon as possible.

It was noted that there had been a plethora of incidents coming before the Laws and Ethics Committee recently which could and should have been dealt with at the event. The Chairman promised that the TD Panel of which he was chairman would seek to strengthen the responsibilities of Tournament Directors to this end.

7.4 Selection Committee 7th November 2007

7.4.1 NPC for Seniors

After the discussion earlier in the meeting on the preparation of budgets and bearing in mind that the provision of an NPC for the Seniors in Pau fell within next year's budget, this was deferred back to the Selection Committee.

7.4.2 Responsibilities for Under- 28s

It was decided that the responsibility for the selection and training of the Under-28s should remain with the Selection Committee.

7.5 Youth Committee, 24th October 2007 and 16th January 2008

The Chairman reported that Terms of Reference for the Committee were being produced by Christine Duckworth. After these had been put to the Committee, they would be passed to the Board for its approval.

The Board agreed to reverse its decision of some years back barring Young Player of the Year and Young Pair of the Year from receiving the award a second time.

Jeff Morris said that last year Sussex had generously funded a number of children to go to the Junior Teach-In at Loughborough. He suggested that other Counties should be invited to do the same for this coming year's event.

He pointed out that the Junior Camrose was being held in Manchester in February and felt that this was a golden opportunity to bring bridge to the attention of pupils and teachers in local schools. He was hoping to persuade local MPs - and indeed the Minister of Education - to visit the event. He had been liaising with Matt Betts to create as much publicity for it as possible.

We had been approached with a generous offer of funding spread over three years to promote bridge among young people. The donor wanted this money to be used for the establishment of projects, aimed at children aged between seven and eleven, that would continue after the funding had been used. The Youth Committee was examining possible schemes, but would welcome any ideas from the Board or indeed from anyone else.

Graham Jepson reminded the Board of their responsibility for the Junior Squad Managers.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Barry Capal informed the Board that:

- 8.1 Michael Clark would be taking over as Web-Master from the 1st April 2008.
- 8.2 The EBU had been granted rights to the Learn and Play Online program by the ACBL, which would be progressed by John Pain. The Board expressed its thanks to the ACBL for their generosity in this matter.

<p style="text-align: center;">Next Meeting: Thursday 6th March 2008 at 12.30 pm McAlpine Offices, 40 Bernard Street, London.</p>
